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CPYRGHT

Change Coming?

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If President Johnson is re-elected, will there be a change in official U.S. policy on VietNam in 1965?

Administration sources are saying that the paper written by a CIA officer expressing doubt that victory can be won in South VietNam does not reflect the government view—simply the view of one officer in the CIA. But other members of the board of national estimates in the CIA approved the view expressed by Willard Matthias, and according to experienced observers in Washington it does reflect a view widely held in the government. Thus it would seem that the administration doubts victory can be won, while saying publicly that it can be won and that the U.S. is going to win.

Mr. Matthias said that if large scale U.S. support continues and if further political deterioration in South VietNam is prevented, a "prolonged stalemate" could be attained. This, we believe, would be acceptable only to American citizens who would be willing to see continued losses of U.S. life as

well as a continued pouring of U.S. arms into VietNam.

Mr. Matthias also said that political evolution in South VietNam and world developments might lead "to some kind of negotiated settlement based upon neutralization." Settlement based upon neutralization is precisely what the administration has been saying is unacceptable. It is contended, for public consumption at least, that neutralization is unrealistic because regardless of any agreement the Communists might make during negotiations, they would not abide by a neutralization. At the least, it would amount to a "neutralization against the United States."

Yet there is growing sentiment in favor of exploration of the possibility of a neutralization agreement, in the hope that somehow it could be made to stick, possibly because of changing world developments.

If President Johnson is re-elected, any change in U.S. policy on VietNam probably would not be noticeable overnight to the public. Privately the wheels might be turning fast but the public probably would become aware of the change gradually.